Migration and the Dilemma of Belonging

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Abstract

This paper highlights the most challenging decision of people in their lives: to leave their home and township in search of a safer or better life, or migration. This movement of people is most often triggered by political crises, natural disasters and socio-economic push factors. Migration, especiallyinternational migration, is an important problem for many European and other developed countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia. The cultural difference between the natives and the migrants creates suspicion and lack of trust, causing the dilemma of belonging. Immigration is becoming even more important in this era of 'globalization' or 'new times,' as it is sometimes called,an era in which distances have become even closer.

Keywords

Migration, dilemma of belonging, Immigration

Migration

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3)what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. Migration is as old as thehistory of humanity. This phenomenon is embedded in trade and cultural exchange and has offered opportunities for millions of people worldwide to forge safe and meaningful lives abroad (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018).

It forces people to leave their families, and culture and seek survival in a different land. This migrant status already puts them into a precarious and vulnerable condition, and usually results in exploitation by their employers. They are often perceived to be a bad competition by citizens in thedestination community. The growing rhetoric of building a wall, creating a new border force, establishing a camp, stopping the boats or restricting access has political, social and humanitarian consequences.

Many countries are coming up with better policies that will alleviate the problem of migrants. Whilesome people treat them normally, others feel that they are just meddling with the native culture and reducing the employment of the natives.

History

The pre-modern migration of human populations began with the movement of Homo erectus out of Africa across Eurasia about 1.75 million years ago. Homo Sapiens appears to have occupied all of Africa about 150,000 years ago; some members of this species moved out of Africa 70,000 years ago(or, according to more recent studies, as early as 125,000 years ago into Asia and even as early as 270,000 years ago), and had spread across Australia, Asia and Europe by 40,000 BCE. Industrialization encouraged migration wherever it appeared. Transnational labor migration reached apeak of three million migrants per year in the early twentieth century. The World Wars, and wars, genocides, and crises sparked by them, had an enormous impact on migration. Muslims moved from the Balkan to Turkey, while Christians moved the other way, during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After the Holocaust, the Jewish communities moved to Palestine, which is now the state of Israel. Following the Russian Civil War, about 3 million people migrated to the new Soviet Union.

Post war decolonization also resulted in a lot of such migratory events. After the partition of India, alarge number of people migrated from India to Pakistan and vice versa based on their religious beliefs.

Data on Migration

According to the IOM World Migration Report 2020, as of June 2019 the number of international migrants was estimated to be almost 272 million globally, 51 million more than in 2010. Nearly two thirds were labour migrants. International migrants comprised 3.5 per cent of the global population in2019. This compared to 2.8 per cent in 2000 and 2.3 per cent in 1980. In 2016 there were 40.3 millioninternally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide and 22.5 million refugees. Further, the total number ofpeople estimated to have been displaced globally is the highest on record of IOM. According to UNHCR, the number of globally forcibly displaced people worldwide was 79.5 million at the end of 2019. Of these, 26 million were refugees (20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 5.6 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate). 45.7 million people were internally displaced, 4.2 million were asylum-seekers, and 3.6 million were Venezuelans displaced abroad. In 2019, the number of international migrants' worldwide – people residing in a country other than their country ofbirth – reached almost 272 million (from 258 million in 2017). Female migrants constituted 48 per cent of international migrants. There were an estimated 38 million migrant children, three out of four

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International migrants were of working age, meaning between 20 and 64 years old. 164 million were migrant workers. Approximately 31% of the international migrants worldwide resided in Asia, 30% in Europe, 26% in the Americas, 10% in Africa and 3% in Oceania.

Even before the Taliban retook control, more than 550,000 people had been forced to flee their homes this year due to fighting, according to the UNHCR. That means an estimated 3.5 million Afghans are currently internally displaced within the country. In addition to those within Afghanistan's borders, about 2.2 million refugees and asylum seekers were also seeking sanctuary in neighboring nations as of the end of last year. Neighboring countries Pakistan and Iran saw the highest numbers of Afghanistan's refugees and asylum seekers last year. Almost 1.5 million fled to Pakistan in 2020, while Iran hosted 780,000, according to UNHCR figures. "The Afghan crisis is creating new facts in the geopolitical sphere, and at the same time, is creating the possibilities for migrant flows. It is known that we as a European country participate in the institutions of the European Union, and within this framework a series of decisions are made. But we cannot wait passively for the possible impact," Chrisochoidis told reporters.

Source: Global Migration Data Portal

Analysis

"Migration powers economic growth, reduces inequalities, and connects diverse societies. Yet it is also a source of political tensions and human tragedies"

- Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Recent years have witnessed growing interest in a series of issues related to migration, including identity formation and change, the role of social capital and social networks, ethnic discrimination, racism and xenophobia, socio-political participation and mobilisation and the complex nature of thecausal mechanisms linked to migration. Unfortunately, some of those destination nations do not adequately take care of the safety and other needs of these migrants at work places.

Most times they were cheaply exploited and assaulted by both employers and co-workers

Most times the locals of the destination communities feel threatened and dominated by the mere presence of these migrants and launch attacks on them without any provocation. It is estimated that around 167 countries across the world have fully or partially closed their borders during COVID-19 pandemic. 57 states made no exception for people seeking asylum. Many countries are using the excuse of pandemic to reject refugees from entering the land and water borders. Countriessuch as Italy and Malta closed their ports for refugees. The unfriendly political environment in mostAfrican nations is responsible for the level of international migration situations experienced by Africans.

Women migrant workers who are pushed into the shadows of society during the crisis are likely to experience high levels of harassment and violence and with services such as hotlines being cut during pandemic, they will have fewer ways to seek help and escape it. Systematic violence and torture have been inflicted by police against migrants in Croatia, according to a new report from the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

Libya has seen an increase this year in kidnappings and torture of migrants by militia groups, who extort ransom payments from desperate family members, according to aid groups operating in the North African country. The UN Special Rapporteur against Torture identified in a 2018 report that an average of 27% of refugees and migrants are torture survivors and, in some situations, more than 70%. Since 2006, Yemeni traffickers in and around Haradh have found a particularly horrific way tomake money: by taking migrants captive and transporting them to isolated camps, where they inflictsevere pain and suffering to extort money from the migrants' relatives and friends in Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia. There were 973 evictions in Calais in 2020 – nearly three a day, and more than doublethe 452 recorded in 2018, according to the reports of Human Rights Observers.

In December alone, 526 tents were seized and 41 arrests were made. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. government had forced asylum seekers and migrants, including at least 16000 children and nearly 500 infants under the age of one, to return to Mexico under the "MigrantProtection Protocols"—better known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy. A study was carried out using the case notes of all Sierra Leoneans referred to the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture between 1996 and 1998 for medical reports. In the sample of 36 cases there were 68 reported incidents of torture or human rights abuse.

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Sixty-nine per cent (18/26) of the women in the sample had been raped at least once, and 72% (26/36) of the

sample had been beaten at least once. The average time for the minimum due process of the asylum claim to be

processed was 44 months (3.7 years). On 31 January 1999, 61% of the sample (22 people) were still involved

in the asylum process. The organization Human Rights Watchhas denounced that a "deportation center in

Riyadh is holding hundreds of mostly Ethiopian migrant workers in conditions so degrading that they amount

to ill treatment."

Methodology

This research paper has been written after exploring the writings of various organizations and individuals. The

current global happenings to international and local migrants will be equally explored. The analysis was based

on various reports, news articles and other channels. Migration research this informed by different strands of

theory building and is often anchored in epistemological, ontological and methodological frameworks.

Global Action

In 2016, the UN General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large

movements of refugees and migrants. The UN Secretary-General prepared the report 'In Safety and

Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants' with recommendations on the issue. UN

Member States adopted a set of commitments, known as the New York Declaration for Refugees and

Migrants in which they recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to migration. The New York

Declaration acknowledges the positive contribution of migrants to sustainable and inclusive development,

and commits to protecting the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants,

regardless of their migratory status. In March 2017,the UN Secretary-General appointed Louise Arbour of

Canada as his Special Representative for International Migration to lead the follow-up to the migration-

related aspects of the High-Level Summit. As a result of the New York Declaration, UN Member States

agreed to work together to develop the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted

at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in December 2018 in Morocco. The GCM

covers diverse issues such as strengthening labour rights for migrant workers, improving migration data as

a basis for evidence-based policies, saving lives and establishing international efforts on missing migrants,

and many others. The implementation of the GCM will represent progress in governing migration in a way

that increases its benefits for individuals, communities and countries, and reduces its risks for all.

In December 2000, the General Assembly proclaimed 18th December International MigrantsDay. On that day in 1990, the Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Suggestions

Guidance and counseling can support individual paths to self-sufficiency, better well-being and provide stability by addressing trauma, displacement, mental health, transitional readjustment, or simply opening up access to opportunities, and creating new ones. These services each provide a place and space for individuals and/or groups to find their own identity and to gain a sense of hope and optimism for a better future. Fundamentally, wrong assumptions, inequalities and bias have to be challenged by guidance and counseling professionals, underpinned by a strong evidence-base. This can then have a positive effect in influencing the publicperception of migrants and the policymakers' stance. There is a growing need for analytical tools and approaches that allow us to deal with the complex, contradictory, and contested nature of migration. This is a political, cultural and social phenomenon that requires greater understanding of contemporary dynamics and their manifold implications. Those working in these professional fields need to be inspired by good and interesting theories, methods and innovative practice from around the world and develop knowledge, skills and competences for multicultural guidance and counseling. As the world economy is severely affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more migrants may unfortunately have to return or revisit their plans taken before the pandemic. The impact of return migration may span from decline in remittances, poverty, to encountering challenges in reintegration, to the risk of persecution and death in extreme cases. All these possibilities necessitate earlier preparations of governments and international humanitarian actors. Voluntary return should be facilitated by both countries of origin and countries of residence by ensuring minimum loss in previously acquired rights (e.g., residence, pension). Forced returns of refugees and irregular migrants from territories of immigration and borders with the excuse of the pandemic should be avoided. Return operations have to ensure the safety, voluntariness and dignityof people. Global humanitarian and health cooperation, through building on existing coordination structures, localization and flexible funding structures, should

be mobilized and improved.

Conclusion

Migration in itself is not a problem as no nation can completely exist in isolation of others. It's thecross fertilization of ideas that leads to the creation of a sustainable global integration and dependence. Each nation somehow depends on another to function economically and politically.

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It is the cross fertilization of ideas that leads to the creation of a sustainable global integration and dependence. Each nation somehow depends on another to function economically and politically. Inthe long run, this is necessary for many developing countries in Africa, South Asia, South America and the Middle East. Reintegration of returnees should be taken more seriously.

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